

St Andrew, Haughton le Skerne

The village of Haughton-le-Skerne has been almost absorbed into the north-eastern outskirts of Darlington, but the low-lying and flood-prone meadows flanking the River Skerne still form something of a divide between the two; beyond, on a slight eminence, stands the ancient church, at the west end of the long village.

St Andrew's Church consists of west tower, aisleless nave with south porch and transepts (or transeptal chapels; there is no crossing), and chancel with vestry and organ chamber on the north.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Exterior

The **West Tower** is trapezoidal in plan, with a stair turret (rectangular in plan at the base but stepping back to a semi-octagonal form in its upper parts) to the south-west. The north wall of the tower and south wall of the turret are continuous with the side walls of the nave, resulting in the central axis of the tower itself being set some distance north of that of the nave. The tower has no buttresses; there is a chamfered set-back at the level of the clock chamber floor, and a moulded string below the embattled parapet.

The tower contains a rather confusing mix of fabric types. The lower walls, up to around the level of the sill of the west window, are of roughly-coursed smallish blocks of Magnesian Limestone, with occasional larger sandstone blocks. The upper part of the lower stage has a lot more sandstone. The upper stage is largely of sandstone, mostly in the form of rounded cobbles; at belfry level there is a large patch of limestone in the centre of the west wall (where there is no belfry opening), and the east wall has largely been rebuilt in the same material. The sandstone quoins are laid in rough side-alternate fashion, markedly irregular in the lowermost part (roughly contiguous with the limestone fabric) and a little more uniform above.

The west door of the tower, which, being set on the line of the central axis of the nave, is well south-of-centre in the tower wall, is of early Norman date (and almost certainly re-set). The actual opening is square-headed, with a heavy roughly-tooled lintel; it is framed beneath a semicircular arch of one square order, carried on jamb shafts with simple cushion capitals.

The west window, set central to tower and thus somewhat to the north of the doorway beneath, is of three cinquefoil-headed lights under a four-centred head, with the simplest panel tracery above; there is a moulded hood. The dressings of the window are all recent (1960s?) and omit the cusping of the sub-lights of the original.

The only other openings in the tower, apart from a series of small square-headed loops lighting the stair, are at belfry level, where there are two-light windows to north, south and east; each is of two trefoil-cusped ogee-headed lights under a four-centred head, with the spandrel open. Below each one (and below the patch of limestone fabric that seems to replace the western opening) are traces of a blocked opening, possibly serving an earlier belfry before the tower was heightened (see structural history).

There is a moulded string below the crenellated parapet, which a simple flat-topped coping to merlons and embrasures, and looks of late 18th/early 19th century character.

The south wall of the **Nave** contains a variety of fabrics; the earliest seems to be roughly-coursed and roughly-shaped large blocks of sandstone, forming the lower parts of the wall, but ending c 1.5 m short of the tower; west of the fabric, smaller coursed stone, seems to be continuous with that of the tower. The upper parts of the walls have more cobbles; a vague patch above the porch roof marks the position of a pre-1895 gallery window.

The south doorway (see interior description) is now covered by the south porch; to either side of the porch are square-headed three-light windows of 1895, each of these has three trefoil-headed ogee-arched lights, within a square frame, with pierced spandrels and a hoodmould with turned-back ends.

A short length of the external face of the east wall of the nave is exposed in the angle between the chancel and the south

transept, This shows the original south-east angle quoin, of rough side-alternate type, the individual blocks varying between 0.35 and 0.45 m in height.

The north wall of the nave has a similar mix of fabric types to the south; the earliest phase, of large roughly-squared blocks, again terminates short of the end of the wall may be a surviving quoin, where one large block 1.4 m short of the tower. There is a large patch of coursed sandstone at the west end of the wall (concealing the blocked lancet visible internally); the lower part of this patch appears to course in with the fabric of the tower wall to the west. The plain square-headed north doorway, now blocked, has jambs that taper slightly inwards, carrying a heavy lintel.

The South Porch and Transepts and Vestry/Organ Chamber of 1895 are of snecked roughly-faced stone (a purplish sandstone) with tooled ashlar dressings and parapet. The **Porch** has a chamfered plinth and a moulding string course below the windows in the side walls; there are stepped diagonal buttresses at the external angles. The outer arch is of two continuous chamfered orders, with a moulded hood, with an trefoiled ogee-headed niche above interrupting a second moulded string at the base of the parapet; the parapet has a moulded coping, and the gable is topped by a foliate cross finial. In each side wall is a single trefoiled light under a square head, with a hoodmould that has turned-back ends.

The **Transepts** have a stepped and moulded plinth and diagonal buttresses with concave steps, and a moulded string below the windows. There is another moulded string below the parapet, on the end walls this is not gabled, but has a stepped-up central section, enclosing a cusped quatrefoil panel containing a plain shield; there is a central foliate cross finial

The end walls of the transepts each have a window of three trefoiled lights with free 15th-century style tracery over, under a four-centred arch. The east wall of the south transept and west wall of the north have square-headed windows of two trefoil-headed lights, with pierced spandrels; these windows all have hollow-chamfered frames, and hoodmoulds with turned-back ends.

The **Chancel**, like the nave, shows an interesting variety of fabric types. The western two-thirds of the south wall is basically of cobble fabric, with three larger elongate blocks near the base; at the east end of this part are two further blocks that may be the remains of an original south-east quoin; beyond this point the fabric changes abruptly to coursed squared stone. The upper sections of the wall are much disturbed, and the metre or so below the parapet, of snecked stone, seems to be a heightening of 1895; the ashlar parapet (purplish sandstone) with a moulded string below and a moulded coping, is certainly of this date.

At the west end of the south wall is a square-headed 'low-side' window of two trefoiled ogee-headed lights; its sill, inner frame and tracery are restoration, and there seems to be a patch in the fabric below, perhaps implying that there was at one time a doorway in this position.

Further east are three round-headed Norman windows, each with its head cut into a single rectangular block. In the case of the westernmost, the head seems to cut into an 'L-shaped' block, perhaps indicating that the window is an insertion. The central window is of 1895 (although perhaps re-using older material) and can clearly be seen to be set within the jambs of a wider opening. The eastern window seems coeval with the squared-stone fabric of this section of the wall.

At the south-east angle of the chancel is a clasping buttress, with a plain square top; what looks like a stepped plinth on the south is probably simply exposed footing courses.

The east wall is again quite complex. At either end are remains of a string course, chamfered above and below (cf Aycliffe) at the level of the sills of the original windows, a pair or triplet of round-headed lights, of which only the outermost jambs remain (with two of three voussoirs of the head of the northern). A subsequent window, only the jambs of which are visible, has cut down below the string course and removed its centre section; the present east window, of 1895, is set higher in the wall, and is a little narrower than its predecessor. It has three trefoiled ogee lights with cusped panel tracery above, under a four-centred arch and a hoodmould with turned-back ends. The gable above is all of 1895, but has roughly-coursed square stone that is probably older material recycled; the gable, topped by a moulded coping and a foliate cross finial, contains a quatrefoil opening within a square frame.

Only the eastern part of the north wall of the chancel is visible externally; it contains one further round-headed window of the same type as the three on the south.

The **Vestry and Organ Chamber** together comprise a rectangular block on the north side of the chancel; there is a pointed doorway on the north, with a continuous wave moulding, and two square-headed windows, one of two trefoil-headed lights on the north and a similar one of three lights on the east. There is a small and lower block at the north-east corner, containing a toilet.

The Interior

The interior of the church is plastered and whitewashed except for exposed dressings, and the interior of the late-19th century parts (transepts, porch and vestry) which are of squared stone).

The **Tower** opens to the nave by a tall arch of roughly four-centred form. There are no responds as such, the two chamfered orders simply dying into the side walls; below the arch the angle of tower and nave walls has exposed dressings (clearly patched), of irregular side-alternate form.

The west doorway has jambs cut straight through the wall, except for a splay, presumably secondary, to the inner angle of the northern, which has a drawbar tunnel 1.55 m long.

The west window has a rear arch of irregular four-centred form (very like the tower arch in shape), with a narrow chamfer to its head only.

The doorway to the tower stair, at the east end of the south wall, has a pointed archway of uncertain date, rebated for a wooden frame. From the newel stair a crudely-cut square-headed doorway (clearly secondary) has opened eastward (through the southern part of the west wall of the nave), to serve a gallery; its external face is now concealed by plaster. A plain square-headed doorway gives access to the ringing chamber, where a plain timber lintel in the west wall may indicate the position of a former opening (although it might simply be a repair - externally there is a broad vertical strip of rebuilt masonry extends the full height of the upper stage of the tower). A series of old north-south ceiling beams carry the bell frames above.

Another rough square-headed doorway opens from the stair into the belfry. The belfry openings have no dressings to their rear arches; that on the east has a recent timber lintel, supporting a corbel which carries the end of the central tie-beam of the roof; at its west end (where there is now no opening) this is supported on a taller column of masonry.

The belfry roof timbers are perhaps of late medieval date; they comprise three cambered tie-beams (one central and one against north and south walls) carrying a ridge and two purlins, the latter shifted a little from their original positions.

The south door of the **Nave** now opens within the 1894/5 south porch. The doorway is quite like that on the west of the tower, in having a plain square-headed opening with a roughly-tooled lintel, and a plain tympanum above within a semicircular arch of one square order, supported by jamb shafts (the western renewed) with bases largely concealed by the concrete floor, and cushion capitals and impost, each with a chamfer below a horizontal groove. The impost also support a hoodmould, with a simple billet moulding. Internally there is a simple round-headed rear arch; the rebated jambs are cut square to the wall, without any splay, and there is a drawbar tunnel 1.82 m long on the west, together with a corresponding socket on the east.

The four 1894/5 windows which light the nave each have lightly-tooled ashlar dressings, and shallow segmental rear arches carrying a simple chamfer. On the north remains of two earlier windows are only visible internally. At the extreme west end of the nave is a lancet, with a variety of worked stones now set into its blocking. Its east jamb (the western is more or less flush with the west wall of the nave) is of roughly side-alternate fashion, the blocks having a horizontal pecked tooling. The dressings of the second window (only the western internal jamb of which survives, immediately west of the eastern of the two 1895 windows) show a similar tooling, but the proportions of the blocks are quite different, and the turning of the head might imply a semicircular rather than pointed rear arch; this is presumably the 'Norman' window, 'corresponding in character to those in the chancel' referred to in an 1893 parish magazine (Gouldsmith 1929, 6).

The internal recess of the blocked north doorway, into which a variety of pre-Conquest and medieval stones have been set, is a plain square-headed opening, without the slight inward taper of the jambs seen in the external opening.

The nave has a panelled wagon roof of 1895.

The **South Porch** has stone benches on each side, with above these a broad recess beneath a chamfered segmental arch; the rear walls of the recesses, below and to either side of the small trefoil-arched windows, are largely made up of re-set carved stones, mostly medieval cross slabs (see sepulchral monuments section).

Around the internal head of the outer arch of the porch is an incised and painted inscription:

'This porch was presented by John and Margaret Feetham/ and dedicated by them in loving memory of their children Marion and Charles A.D.1894'

The porch has a shallow-pitched roof, with a cambered tie-beam against each end wall, carrying a ridge; the timbers look to be of late medieval or 17th century date, and may have been re-set from a the previous porch.

The **Transepts** open to the nave by pointed arches of two chamfered orders, the outer order continuous to the ground and the inner carried on moulded corbels; each has a hollow-chamfered hood, with turned-back ends to the west. The windows in the side walls have chamfered segmental rear arches, whilst the larger windows in the gable ends have four-centred rear arches, again chamfered. On the east side of the north transept a segmental-pointed arch of two chamfered orders opens into the organ Chamber; the inner order dying into the jambs and the outer continued to the ground.

The transepts each have two-bay roofs, with slightly-cambered tie-beams, each carrying a ridge with one purlin to each side; the timber is old (late medieval or 17th century), and re-used from the pre-1895 nave roof.

The **Chancel** opens to the nave both by the original Romanesque chancel arch, and a broader arch of 1895 directly above it. The original arch is quite small, and has a semicircular head; towards the nave there are two square orders, but to the chancel only one, springing from an impost course, grooved and chamfered below (like the imposts of the south door); on the east the impost course is continuous for the full width of the chancel, but on the west it has been cut back flush with the walls. Below the impost band the jambs are of large square blocks; on each side the block directly below the impost has a large socket, for the top-rail of a screen. The lower part of the western angle of the north jamb has a later chamfer. The south jamb, apart from the top two courses, is all 19th-century restoration. The two orders of the arch itself are not superimposed; the soffit is exposed, showing only one 'through stone'. The upper arch, of 1895, is of segmental pointed form, and of two chamfered orders, dying into the jambs.

Immediately to the north of the arch is a round-arched squint, without any exposed dressings; in the corresponding position to the south there is a shallow arched or domed recess in the west face of the wall (now partly concealed by the Pulpit), with a level sill, and old plaster preserving a painted pattern of a grid of black lines, set diagonally (and with small crosses at each intersection), with less distinct traces of motifs in red.

The lower walls of the chancel are concealed by the 17th-century panelled dado. On the south of the altar is a piscina with a chamfered and trefoiled arch; any remains of its bowl are concealed by the panelling. Opposite is an aumbry, concealed by a pair of 19th-century doors. Both aumbry and piscina are respected by the panelling, and flanked by a pair of its fluted pilasters. The three round-headed windows on the south and the one on the north all have exposed dressings; those of the central (renewed) window on the south are clearly of some age (and thus presumably re-set), but do not have the same diagonal tooling. The low-side window has a shouldered rear arch; the inner of its two lintels is a re-used medieval grave slab (see sepulchral monuments). On the north of the chancel are an 1895 archway to the Organ Chamber (similar to the upper chancel arch in form, but largely concealed by the organ pipes) and a doorway to the vestry; the stonework of this is concealed by the panelled dado but a slight inward splay suggests that it originated as an external priest's door.

The chancel has a panelled wagon roof of 1895, similar to that of the nave.

In the eastern angles of the chancel are remains of the internal jambs of the 12th-century eastern triplet. These have had jamb shafts (now gone) with moulded bases (only surviving on the south) and scalloped capitals; a few voussoirs of the rear arches survive, bearing a roll moulding.

Inside the **Vestry** is a small square-headed fireplace, with a roll-moulded surround, set diagonally at the north-east corner, and a square-headed door at the north end of the west wall, opening into the Organ Chamber, which can also be reached from the north transept, by an elliptical-arched doorway in a panelled oak screen closing the lower part of the large arch there.

FITTINGS AND FURNISHINGS

The Font has a moulded shaft and base of Frosterley marble (described by Pevsner & Williamson, 1983, 157) as a 'thick C17 baluster' but possibly a medieval piece; the sandstone bowl, and the two octagonal steps on which the font stands, are recent. The **Font Cover** is a 17th-century piece, and octagonal spire with traceried sides, and a finial with a dove.

The Bells. There are three bells, the first of Pre-Reformation date; they bear the inscriptions:

- (1) V.T.S.R. Q.P. D.E.F. (in three panels, the third inverted)
- (2) Soli Deo Gloria S.S. 1664
- (3) Venite exultemus Domino S.S. 1664/ ('S.S' for Samuel Smith of York, the bell founder)

The Bell Frames were originally are of short-headed type 3 b (Pickford 1993) with curved braces from sill to king post, later converted to type 3 c by having short struts bolted between the braces and the head; there is a single transom on each side, with a cut for a second (or an earlier position) adjacent to it; in plan the frames are of type 3.1 (three parallel pits). The frames presumably date from 1664 when a 'Sesse' was charged on the Parishioners to defray the cost of the casting and hanging of the bells (Gouldsmith 31). The bells are now hung on a modern beam and chimed; two of the old bell wheels are hung on the west wall of the belfry.

Furnishings

Haughton church is well known for its 17th-century furnishings. They have been linked to a parish rate in 1662, but Pevsner and Williamson (1983, 157) are persuaded that they are contemporary with the very similar fittings installed in 1638 at Brancepeth, under Rector (later Bishop) John Cosin; the Haughton rector Eleanor Duncan (d.1650) had links with Cosin.

The 17th-century work includes half-height **Panelling** in the chancel, with gadrooned pilasters on high plinths ornamented with diamonds; particularly interesting is the way in which this panelling respects both aumbry and piscina. The **Altar Rails** have fat diablo balusters, like the stair rails to pulpit and reading desk. The **Reredos** is a panel with gadrooned pilasters, and three rib-vaulted canopies, probably not in their original form.

The **Reading Desks** with their linenfold fronts and the Choir Stalls with panelled ends and rich poppy heads look to be largely 19th-century work. The **Clergy Stalls**, two on each side of the chancel arch, now face inwards, but before their restoration they backed onto the west wall of the chancel and faced east. The panelling behind, returning round the western angles of the chancel, ends to the east in free-standing Ionic colonettes.

The **Pulpit** and **Reading Desk** stand south and north of the chancel arch respectively. They are very similar, both having pedimented tops supported by strapwork on the testers, backboards with blank arches and strapwork down the sides, and arcaded fronts. The pulpit is the more elaborate of the two, having rustication on the corner posts, and buckle ornament on the front.

In the nave the **Panelled Dado** is partly of 1895 (Gouldsmith 1929, 19, quotes an 1893 parish

magazine as stating that most of the nave dado panelling had 'unfortunately perished from the dampness of the walls and could not be re-used' although any surviving pieces would be re-set)

Most of the **Box Pews** in the nave (15 on the north and 13 on the south) retain their gates; all have been altered (mostly by being slightly lengthened); to the west are ungated pews which are largely 1895 work, re-using some old ends.

On the north wall of the nave, above the blocked north door, are the **Royal Arms** of George II, dated 1757, and a pair of **Hatchments**, the eastern dated 1790, with the initials 'E.A.'

SEPULCHRAL MONUMENTS

Apart from some of the Pre-Conquest stones, which may be of sepulchral origin (see 'Carved Stones') the earliest monuments in the church are the fine collection of medieval cross slabs; the majority of these are built into the internal faces of the side walls of the south porch. The 25 slabs in the porch walls and a further two in the recess of the blocked north door range from the 11th to the 14th century in date, and are described and illustrated by Ryder (1985, 96-98, plates 37 & 38); in addition to these an incised slab has been re-used as one of the lintels of the 'low-side' window in the south wall of the chancel; the only visible party of the design is a pair of shears.

In the floor of the baptistery, directly east of the font, is a late medieval grave slab with four lines of inscription. Several early accounts give the text as:

Under ysto lyith D
an Elisabeth Nanton
Priares of the saul Jhu
have merci +

(reading from Gouldsmith, 33). Elizabeth Nanton, or Naunton, was prioress of Neasham in 1488 and 1489. This stone is actively decaying; parts of the inscription (including most of the first line) are now quite legible.

Fixed onto the east wall of the nave, immediately to the north of the chancel arch, are four brass plates, all parts of the same monument, to Dorothy, daughter of Richard Cholmeley of Whessoe, d.1592, and her twin sons. Two plates bear an inscription, a third a figure of 'a lady, holding in either arm a babe in swaddling clothes. She wears a French hood, ruff, and farthingale open in front, displaying an embroidered skirt', and a fourth a coat of arms.

In the chancel floor are at least two armorial ledger stones, now concealed by a fitted carpet; beneath the baptistery carpet and north of the font is a 1782 ledger, also decaying. On the north wall of the chancel is a pedimented tablet to Charles Morgan, d.1664, with a Latin inscription. On the same wall is a marble tablet to Rev Thomas le Mesurier d.1822, and on the north wall of the tower an oval tablet to Michael Hardcastle d.1818, with a Latin inscription. Other wall monuments are minor, and of 19th and 20th century dates. Gouldsmith gives full details of all the 18th and 19th century monuments,

CARVED STONES

Haughton church has an extensive collection of Pre-Conquest carved stones, re-set in 1895 either in the recesses of the blocked lancet and doorway on the north of the nave, or in the internal walls of the south porch. The stones are described and illustrated by Cramp (1984) 102 et seq.

(1),(2), (9) and (10) are set in the recess formed by the blocked lancet:

(1) Lower part of cross-shaft; early 11th century.

(2) Part of shaft, possibly expanding into head of cross. Early 11th century.

(3) - (6) are set in the recess formed by the blocked north door:

(3) Part of cross shaft, 1.22 m long, of mid 10th to mid-11th century date. Crudely-carved lacertine designs, possibly copied from the much-more sophisticated (6). 'Whether this is apprentice work or merely the last dregs of a tradition it is impossible to say'.

(4) Fragment of cross-shaft, mid-10th to mid-11th century.

(5) Part of cross shaft? Early 11th century.

(6) Upper part of cross shaft with interlacing beasts, very much in the Jellinge style: 'this piece establishes that the best carving from this site occurs with the most purely Scandinavian ornament'. First half of 10th century.

Pieces (7), (8), (11) - (14) are built into the interior of the west wall of the porch.

(7) Part of cross-shaft or head. Uncertain date.

(8) Part of cross-head, without any extant carving. Uncertain date.

(9) Fragment of hogback? 10th century?

(10) Round-headed grave marker. 11th century.

(11) Part of round-headed grave marker. Second half of 11th century.

(12) Grave-marker. 10th to 11th century.

(13) Fragment of grave-marker, Late 11th century?

(14) Fragment, possibly of side of cross-shaft or cross-head. 11th century?

Other Stones

Now resting on the internal sill of the window at the west end of the south wall of the nave is

a rectangular tablet with the date '1725' and the initials of four churchwardens (I.H. for John Hardcastle, T.W. for Thomas Wrangham, R.W. for Robert Wastell and I.R. for John Reveley'

HISTORICAL NOTES

- 1794 The Durham historian Hutchinson (1794, III, 178) privies the first printed description of the church: 'The church stands low at the west end of the village, and is a plain ancient structure, with a tower: it consists of a chancel and nave, without any ailes; the chancel is ten paces in length, and four in width, and the altar is elevated, with three steps to the railing; the whole is wainscotted with oak in pannels. The nave is divided from the chancel by a circular arch, is twenty-nine paces in length, and seven paces in width, uniformly and neatly stalled in oak. The reading-desk and pulpit are placed in opposite corners, at the entrance into the chancel;. There is a gallery at the west end. The font has a neat tabernacle cover of wood, with a dove resting on the top.
- 1823 Surtees (1823, III, 340) prints a brief description of the church, adding that 'the lights are irregular, some single and pointed, others double or treble lights under square labels'. In footnotes he notes that 'above one of the South windows of the nave, a circular arch is built up into the wall, with ornaments of human heads' and that 'the present rector has placed the whole structure in a very creditable state of repair and neatness, and has added a convenient vestry North of the chancel. In digging the foundations, two stone coffins, of the usual form, were discovered just without the North wall of the chancel'.
1834. Mackenzie & Ross (1834,I, 111) add a little to the earlier accounts; the east window was 'a modern sash under a circular arch' and the south window of the chancel 'consists of five lights under a pointed arch'. The north vestry was of brick. In the floor of the chancel were several fragments of stone sculptured with crosses and swords.
1857. Fordyce (1857, I, 517), the fourth of the Durham historians, states that a new organ had been provided, by voluntary subscription, in March 1841, and that on 11 October 1853 a public meeting had been held to consider adding aisles to the church; the plan was rejected as too expensive.

FACULTIES AND OTHER RECORDS OF STRUCTURAL WORK

Note; faculties recorded are those which deal with structural matters; those dealing with stained glass, memorial tablets and moveable furnishings are not included.

Date and Faculty No.	Works
1725	A gallery was constructed at the west end of the nave (removed in 1895); its datestone survives (see 'Carved Stones')

1805	The tower was 'restored' at cost of £96 7s 0d (Gouldsmith 1929, 23)
1817	Gallery enlarged, and north door blocked (ibid, 11)
1839	New stair to gallery, inside the tower, by-passing the old newel (ibid).
1861	Small window inserted high in south wall of nave to light gallery (Gouldsmith 1929, 26)
237 .1879	Plans to restore and enlarge. Plans by <u>William White</u> for scheme involving addition of north aisle, with clerestory over. Never carried out.
318. 1891.	To restore and enlarge church. Scheme by <u>Hicks and Charlewood</u> .. A major restoration scheme including the removal of the gallery, addition of transepts , south porch, organ chamber and new vestry, conversion of the base of the tower into a baptistery, the construction of a new high-pitched roof, and the rebuilding of the south porch. These works were carried out in 1894-5.
2084. 11.10.1924.	Inclusion in the highway of a piece of the churchyard.
2449. 2.2.33.	Erection of a lavatory adjacent to the vestry.
3251. 18.11.49.	AC (Archdeacon's Certificate). Repairs to tower.
3620. 22.5.53	AC. Treatment of roof timbers.
4105. 9.3.59.	AC. Repair and re-decoration.
4621. 15.10.63.	AC. General repairs.
5732. 18.4.78.	Replacement of stonework and redecoration. (This included reconstruction of belfry windows with new stonework by Messrs. Northern Quarries; 1979 QQ))
(1979)	Organ largely rebuilt following flood damage (1995 QQ)
5860. 28.10.80.	Replacement of roof lead.
6480A. 3.3.87.	Repairs to roof etc.
6698. 7.4.88.	Re-pointing of specified areas of walls and parapet.
6960. 24.8.89.	Re-pointing of tower, re-leading etc.

THE STRUCTURAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The earliest parts of the fabric are the side walls of the nave and possibly also those of the western part of the chancel. These are generally thought to be of early 12th century date, but some puzzles remain. Whilst there are some echoes of Pre-Conquest traditions in the quite large angle quoins at the south-east corner of the nave, the monolithic heads of the chancel windows, and the unsplayed jambs of south and west doorways, the nave wall thickness of c 0.85 m and the general Norman character of the work render a pre-1100 date unlikely, as does the fact that a number of the late Pre-Conquest sculptural pieces were retrieved from the side walls of the nave during the 1895 works.

The western part of the chancel has always been seen as coeval with the side walls of the nave, but its fabric is quite different (more cobbles and less large roughly-squared blocks) and the walls are also a little thicker (0.90m) although the difference may be too small to be significant.

It is thus possible, largely on the grounds of the contrast in fabric, to see the western part of the chancel as a little later than the nave. This leaves open the question as to whether the nave is of early 12th century date, or possibly a little earlier (late 11th century?) with the south and west doorways, chancel arch and western part of the chancel dating to a remodelling fifty years or so later; the quite elongate proportions of the western part of the chancel would also tally with this. The unpublished plan prepared from the Victoria County History (National Monuments Record) give the east wall of the nave (and chancel arch) together with the western half of the chancel as late 11th century, with the remainder of the nave and chancel as 12th century; this seems unlikely for several reasons, including the discrepancy between the fabric types of nave and the chancel extension.

One interesting feature of the chancel, no longer apparent, was the positioning of its original doorways. A blocked square-headed doorway at the west end of the north wall, destroyed in 1895, is recorded (Boyle, 679), whilst the low-side window opposite seems to have either been converted into a doorway, or else been set into an earlier doorway opening (the pre-restoration faculty drawings depict it as a blocked doorway). An opposed pair of early doorways here would be an unusual feature that suggests the former existence of porticus or side-chapels, very much in the Pre-Conquest tradition, overlapping the nave/chancel junction as at Escombe and St Peter's church at Bywell (Northumberland).

The eastern part of the chancel is very clearly an addition, perhaps of around 1175; the internal jamb shafts of the east windows, with their scalloped capitals, contrast with the plain cushion capitals of the west and south doorways, and the simplicity of the chancel arch. The round-headed windows in the side walls are probably all of this date; the westernmost on the south looks like an insertion in older fabric.

The west end of the nave also raises some structural puzzles, as the phase I fabric seems to

end 1.4-1.5 m short of the tower; the walling beyond that seems contemporary with the tower. This might be explicable by raising the scenario of the tower being built as a free-standing structure outside the old west end, which was then demolished when nave and tower were linked. The date of the tower itself is another problem. Gouldsmith (1929, 19) contents himself with 'it is thought be some that the Tower was rebuilt in the 13th century'; most other writers see it as being contemporary with the first phase (Boyle, Hodgkin, Pevsner) whereas the unpublished VCH plan ascribes it a 15th-century date.

The west doorway is clearly of early-12th century date, but the complete change in character between tower and nave walls suggests that it has been moved from the original west end; such re-use of 12th-century doorways is relatively common. Apart from the doorway, the earliest dateable features in the tower itself are all of 15th century type, but an examination of the fabric shows that ascribing the whole tower to this one period is a serious over-simplification.

There is a very clear change in fabric type at the level of the sill of the east window, both in the general walling and, to some extent, in the character of the angle quoins. It is difficult to see that as a separate phase of building (ie the plan, and the existence of the stair turret, shows that this was always intended as the lower part of a tower, rather than an extension of the nave); possibly it simply reflects a changeover between two different types of building material.

There is some evidence for another discontinuity at the base of the belfry stage; the walling material remains cobbles (except on the east where the belfry wall has been rebuilt), but the belfry stage of the stair turret is quite different both in form and in the materials used (large sandstone blocks, some reddened); in addition the traces of apparent belfry openings below this stage suggest a heightening of the tower.

However, all these structural phases are lacking in dateable evidence. The 15th-century west window is probably an insertion (it certainly lacks large dressings coursed in with the wall), and the belfry openings, of 14th or 15th century characters, might of course have been re-set from the stage below, where the earlier openings have lost all their dressings. Inside, the tower arch looks of 15th century character; irregularities in its jambs suggest that it is secondary to the fabric.

The one piece of evidence that may give a clue to the date of the lower parts of the tower is at the west end of the north wall of the nave, in the section of wall which may have been constructed to link the earlier nave with the new tower; this is a blocked lancet window, of 13th-century character. On the strength of this, one could suggest that the tower itself may be of 13th date, remodelled (and probably heightened) in the 14th or 15th century. Subsequent to this date there has clearly been a history of structural problems; a major repair on the west extends upwards from the putative earlier belfry opening; at belfry level the repair consists of coursed limestone, and is probably contemporary with the rebuilding of the east wall at this level; these works may have taken place in 1805 (see 'Faculties...' section).

In the body of the church, little evidence now survives of medieval work after the 12th century. The surviving lancet, and perhaps an opposed pair further east (shown on the pre-

works faculty drawings and removed in 1895, although an early 19th-century sketch reproduced by Gouldsmith seems to show a smaller window with a straight hoodmould or label in this position; might the lancets have been a piece of 19th-century Gothicisation?) indicate works in the 13th century, whilst the 'low-side' window in the chancel is probably a 14th-century piece. Another later medieval change seems to have been the substitution of low-pitched leaded roofs for the original high-pitched on; prior to the 1894-5 restoration the nave and chancel had a low-pitched roof, probably of 16th or 17th century date; the nave roof cut across the apex of the tower arch.

Illustrations and descriptions of the fabric prior to the 1895 restoration a little more evidence of medieval and post-medieval works. At the east end of the nave walls were a pair of round-headed windows, with straight mullions bisecting the arch; the southern had a hoodmould with three carved heads (now re-set in the recess formed by the blocked lancet). These may have been 13th or 14th century features, possibly altered at some post-medieval date.

Post-Medieval Changes

Other pre-1895 features in the nave walls were clearly of post-medieval date. East of the porch were a pair of windows each of three round-headed lights, with a third similar one towards the west end of the north wall; their form might suggest a late 17th or early 18th century date (there is a 1683 reference to 'putting out a window' which may refer to one of these; Gouldsmith 1929, 26) ; in the south wall west of the porch was a large round-arched window with a keystone to its head, much more of 18th century character (although it, and the three-light window opposite, were bisected by the western gallery, initially constructed in 1725). A smaller round-headed window above the south porch is known to have been a short-lived insertion of 1861.

Two larger windows in the chancel, the four-light east window with its simple intersecting tracery, and the south window of four stepped lancet lights under a four-centred head, seem to have been crude Gothic revival work, of the late 18th or early 19th century. Sections of the jambs of both survive, and are of poor quality.

Turning to documentary evidence, it is known that the 1725 gallery was reconstructed and extended in 1817 (when the north door was blocked), and a new stair built to it in 1839. Restoration works on the tower in 1805 may well have included the limestone patching of the belfry walls, and quite probably the construction of the present parapet. A brick vestry, with an embattled parapet and a semicircular window on the east, was built in the early 19th century. The south porch was thought to be of post-medieval date as well, although by the time of the 1895 restoration the south door had long been blocked, and the porch was in use as a coalhouse.

The faculty plans for the 1895 restoration give a good picture of the church and its furnishings prior to this major remodelling; in addition a number of pre-restoration drawings and photographs survive (several are displayed in the south transept). The restoration completely changed the character of the building, transforming what had been a rather vernacular village church into a much more superior building with high-pitched roofs, new porch and transepts, and use of ashlar in new parapets and the large nave windows in the fashionable free Perpendicular style seen in other churches built or restored by the respectable partnership of

Charlewood and Hicks (previously Austin, Johnson & Hicks) responsible for much restoration and refurbishment in the last two decades of the 19th and the first of the 20th centuries. The 17th century furnishings of the church were in the main preserved, but post-medieval architectural features were, as usual, ruthlessly swept away, together with a number of genuine medieval features sacrificed to make space for the new extensions. Those in the nave walls have already been mentioned; a second 12th-century window on the north of the chancel was lost to the organ chamber, although its components were probably re-used in the central 'Norman' window in the south wall, replacing the four-light window there; it is doubtful that there was ever a 12th-century window in this position.

Structural works in the present century have generally been minor, and in the nature of repairs, although it is unfortunate that the restored version of the west window was not faithful to its predecessor.

THE CHURCHYARD

The churchyard is quite large, and of irregular and quite elongate plan; the east end, towards the village green, is rounded. Here 'old' walling (of cobble masonry, with flat limestone blocks as coping) survives on either side of the main entrance into the churchyard, where the wall is ramped up on either side of a pair of piers with low pyramidal caps (19th century?). This walling may be of 18th century date; on the north it survives alongside Salters Lane to a change in character, a short distance east of another gate, where there are traces of a southward return, which would give an earlier west wall a few metres west of the tower. If this was an earlier boundary, monument evidence shows that westward enlargement had taken place by c1840.

On the south the old walling continues for some distance south of the eastern gateway and then gives way to limestone walling with a coping of concrete; this is the area in which a small portion of the yard was incorporated in the highway in 1924 (see faculties section); it corresponds with a very distinct east-west scarp in the churchyard that may well have formed a boundary at some time (all the monuments below it look to be of 20th century date); Gouldsmith (62) mentions the churchyard taking in, also in 1924, 'about 670 square yards of land previously in the high road' which may refer to this area.

The churchyard monuments are of some interest; there are quite a number of 18th century headstones (with the usual cherubs etc) and box tombs (notably a good group south-east of the chancel). At the east end of a box tomb immediately to the north of the tarmac path close to the vestry door is a plain medieval coped slab (laid north-south) of Frosterley marble. This may well be the same slab as one referred to in one C19 antiquarian journal (not traced) as being found used as a scratching post for cattle at Little Burdon (in Haughton parish); this may be as the polished nature of this stone might well be the product of bovine friction.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Haughton is still a church that raises some archaeological puzzles; the relatively good documentation of its 19th-century changes (seen in the faculty drawings and in Gouldsmith's

1929 guide, an outstanding contribution to an often dubious genre) is not matched by published interpretations of its earlier history.

Archaeologically, much was lost in the 1895 restoration. It seems likely that all plaster was stripped from the medieval walls (as is implied by the recorded ‘discovery’ of the blocked windows in the nave north wall). However, whilst the floors are all of 1895 (largely concrete with boarded areas under the seating) it seems possible that underfloor deposits may be relatively well preserved, as there is no evidence of an underfloor heating system; the present pipework, at least, is all above floor level. Externally the usual perimeter drain is absent, which again bodes well for the survival of archaeological deposits at the interface of church and churchyard.

Thus any works, inside or close to the exterior walls, which involve disturbance of floor or ground levels will require archaeological monitoring, as will any removal of plaster from the internal walls of the medieval sections of the building.

From the point of view of conservation, the grave slab of Prioress Elizabeth Nanton, beneath the tower, is in poor condition, and merits proper treatment; apart from a re-erected fragment of wall at High Carlbury (Piercebridge) it is our only tangible link with this vanished monastery. The important collection of carved stones set in the porch walls have unfortunately been largely concealed, within the last few years, by the introduction of fitted notice boards; consideration might be given to re-locating these, as Haughton has one of the best collections of lapidary material in the County; with proper interpretive material the stones in the porch (and those in the nave) would prove a valuable historical resource.

The fabric of the church deserves a better study than the brief examination possible here; the exterior merits a proper survey by means of rectified photography (probably both in colour and black-and-white), which might enable the complex jigsaw of different fabric types to be mapped out. The 17th century furnishings are also of importance, and detailed recording may be thought appropriate here as well.

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ST ANDREW'S CHURCH
HAUGHTON-LE-SKERNE

S Elevation before the Restoration

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Peter F Ryder
Historic Buildings Consultant
March 1997

St Andrew's Church, Haughton-le-Skerne

An Archaeological Assessment

Architectural Description	
Exterior	1-3
Interior	3-4
Fittings & Furnishings	5-6
Sepulchral Monuments	6
Carved Stones	7-8
Historical Notes	8
Faculties and other records of Structural Work	8-10
The Structural History of the Church	10-13
The Churchyard	13
Archaeological Assessment	14
Sources Used	14-15
Phased Plan	at end

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St Andrew, Haughton-le-Skerne. February 1997
St Andrew, Haughton-le-Skerne. February 1997